Udlændinge- og
Integrationsministeriet

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION – DENMARK

REPORT TO OECD, OCTOBER 2026

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1.0 LONG-TERM MIGRATION

1.1 Definition of long-term migration

By definition, long-term migration represents the movement of a person to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least one year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of residence. Long-term migration includes both long-term emigration and long-term immigration.

As long-term migration is based on a subsequent residence period of at least 12 months, the availability of the statistics is delayed by one year. Therefore, the latest Danish statistics from a full year are based on immigrants and emigrants entering and leaving Denmark in 2024. Asylum seekers are not included in the statistics even though they may have resided in Denmark for more than a year. This is due to the fact that asylum seekers per definition do not have a residence permit.

1.2 Migration in Denmark

Table 1.1 shows the long-term migration to and from Denmark in the period 1998-2024. The data displayed shows immigration, emigration and net migration for men and women.

The table shows that Denmark had a positive net migration from 1998 to 2018. The net migration was substantially lower in the years 2003-2005 than in previous years due to a decrease in immigration. This decrease may partly be a consequence of changes in the Danish immigration policy, where more restrictive conditions for acquiring residence permit were imposed. The net migration level increased significantly in 2007 and 2008, mostly as a consequence of new legislation regarding residence permits to work or study in Denmark. In the following years, the net migration level decreased again from above 17,000 in 2008 to about 10,000 in 2012. This decrease in net migration is due to a lower number of work permits for foreign nationals. In 2015, the net migration increased to 33,867 due to an overall increase in immigration of foreign nationals. Net migration decreased again from 2016 and was negative in 2019 due to an increase in emigration and lower immigration numbers. In 2021, net migration was significantly higher than in the years 2017-2020, reaching above 19,000 persons. In 2022, net migration was as well much higher than in previous years. This growth can be largely explained by the influx of people displaced from Ukraine during 2022, which reached over 30,000 people. In 2023, net migration decreased to 30,172, which is still substantially higher than in the previous years, except for 2015 and 2022. In 2024, the net migration was at 32,257 persons.

Table 1.1: Long-term migration to and from Denmark, 1998-2024 (persons)

	Immigration			Emigration			Net migration		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1998	19,925	20,499	40,424	15,285	13,589	28,874	4,640	6,910	11,550
1999	19,182	20,166	39,348	15,817	14,374	30,191	3,365	5,792	9,157
2000	20,693	21,303	41,996	16,284	14,675	30,959	4,409	6,628	11,037
2001	21,781	22,242	44,023	16,956	15,064	32,020	4,825	7,178	12,003
2002	20,134	20,667	40,801	16,725	14,944	31,669	3,409	5,723	9,132
2003	18,899	18,655	37,554	17,138	15,282	32,420	1,761	3,373	5,134
2004	18,924	18,860	37,784	17,451	15,496	32,947	1,473	3,364	4,837
2005	19,909	19,785	39,694	17,949	15,944	33,893	1,960	3,841	5,801
2006	22,398	20,999	43,397	18,949	16,651	35,600	3,449	4,348	7,797
2007	26,456	24,318	50,774	19,746	17,173	36,919	6,710	7,145	13,855
2008	29,674	27,148	56,822	21,123	18,231	39,354	8,551	8,917	17,468
2009	25,918	25,451	51,369	22,237	19,025	41,262	3,681	6,426	10,107
2010	26,210	25,734	51,944	21,714	20,045	41,759	4,496	5,689	10,185
2011	27,199	25,634	52,833	21,543	20,074	41,617	5,656	5,560	11,216
2012	27,741	26,357	54,098	22,347	21,492	43,839	5,394	4,866	10,260
2013	31,371	28,941	60,312	22,022	21,288	43,310	9,349	7,653	17,002
2014	36,739	31,649	68,388	22,658	21,768	44,426	14,081	9,881	23,962
2015	42,546	35,946	78,492	22,768	21,857	44,625	19,778	14,089	33,867
2016	39,286	35,097	74,383	27,517	25,137	52,654	11,769	9,960	21,729
2017	35,722	32,857	68,579	29,849	26,554	56,403	5,873	6,303	12,176
2018	33,803	30,866	64,669	31,905	28,476	60,381	1,898	2,390	4,288
2019	32,333	29,051	61,384	35,473	31,047	66,520	-3,140	-1,996	-5,136
2020	29,883	27,347	57,230	28,805	25,017	53,822	1,078	2,330	3,408
2021	34,400	29,089	63,489	23,842	20,166	44,008	10,558	8,923	19,481
2022	57,559	63,624	121,183	32,081	30,846	62,927	25,478	32,778	58,256
2023	50,841	47,503	98,344	35,081	33,091	68,172	15,760	14,412	30,172
2024	52,535	49,189	101,724	36,846	32,621	69,467	15,689	16,568	32,257

Source: EUROSTAT (migr_imm1ctz and migr_emi1ctz)

2.0 THE FLOW OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

2.1 Types of residence permits in Denmark

Denmark has the following different types of residence permits:

- Convention status, protection status and temporary protection status
- Quota refugees (resettled refugees)
- Family reunification
- Employment (includes specialists, researchers and other knowledge workers, green cards)
- Residence on humanitarian grounds
- Residence permits to rejected asylum seekers in certain situations
- Unaccompanied minors (special reasons)
- Students
- Au pairs
- EU/EEA permits (includes the European Union, the EEA countries and Switzerland)
- Others (former Danish nationals, religious preachers etc.)
- Brexit, Afghanistan and Ukraine

2.2 Granting of residence permits

Besides the residence permits granted to refugees, the main types of residence permits in Denmark are based on family reunification and special reasons for staying in Denmark for a limited period (occupation/business, education, traineeship, au pair position, etc.).

Table 2.1 shows the trend in the total number of residence permits granted in Denmark during the period from 2019 to 31st of July 2026.

There was a decrease from 2019 to 2020, which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 the number of permits increased to the level of 2019, and in 2022 there was a significant increase that can be partially explained by the inflow of persons displaced from Ukraine and an overall increase in the number of permits for persons who are in Denmark to work or study.

Throughout the period from 2019 to 2026, EU/EAA nationals have been the largest group of people, which has been granted residence permits. In 2026, so far 18,383 residence permits have been granted to EU/EAA nationals and their families, which constitute approximately 38 percent of the total number of residence permits granted in Denmark.

The Danish Parliament passed a special act in 2022 with the aim to provide a temporary residence basis for persons who have been displaced from Ukraine due to the conflict with Russia. The law entered into force on March 17th, 2022, and has since been extended until March 17th, 2027.

It should be noted that this overview does not directly reflect the level of immigration to Denmark. This is primarily due to the facts that (1) Nordic nationals may enter and stay in Denmark without a residence permit, (2) foreign nationals may subsequently apply for a different type of residence permit (e.g. a person granted family reunification may also be granted asylum) and therefore the same person can have been granted more than one residence permit at different points in time, and (3) some residence permits are never used (e.g. the person never enters Denmark). The only accurate data is thus registry data on immigration. However, the number of residence permits does give an approximate indication of the level of immigration to Denmark.

The figures provided for 2019-2025 are final, while the figures for 2026 are provisional (as per August 10th). The Danish immigration authorities' statistics are based on registrations made in the electronic case and document handling system, which is not designed as an actual statistical system and therefore, there is some degree of uncertainty attached to the provided figures.

Table 2.1: Overview of all residence permits, etc. granted in Denmark, 2019–2026* (Permits, percentage)

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Share 2026
Asylum, etc. (A)	1,783	601	1,362	1,403	1,343	859	875	722	1%
Refugee status	1,737	577	1,097	795	1,306	841	861	707	1%
- of which Geneva Convention status	770	325	466	509	1,177	600	464	385	1%
- of which protection status	658	101	283	71	22	42	31	15	<1%
- of which Temporary protected status	309	120	151	50	106	158	8	1	<1%
- of which quota refugees	0	31	197	165	1	41	358	306	1%
Other status	46	24	265	608	37	18	14	15	<1%
- of which humanitarian residence permit	18	15	6	2	5	4	1	1	<1%
Family reunification, etc. ** (B)	3,648	4,529	3,926	3,357	4,266	4,051	3,631	1,917	4%
Family reunification	3,222	4,012	3,422	2,685	3,035	3,071	2,680	1,503	3%
- of which spouses and cohabitants	2,206	2,862	2,653	2,012	2,176	2,107	1,541	1,130	2%
- of which minor children	1,014	1,146	763	659	850	958	763	371	1%
Other residence cases (incl. adoption)	426	517	504	672	1,231	980	951	414	1%
Work (C)	14,974	11,576	16,850	24,580	21,577	22,424	22,131	13,383	27%
- of which The Pay Limit scheme	2,417	1,220	1,485	2,221	1,672	1,542	1,801	951	2%
- of which Greencard and The Establishment Card	495	612	566	681	158	/	/	/	/
- of which family ties to a person granted residence permit in the work area	4,919	3,342	4,464	6,779	5,690	5,903	5,764	3,875	8%
Study, etc. (D)	16,716	9,408	9,511	15,748	19,356	23,634	21,751	7,388	15%
- of which education	8,455	4,997	5,259	9,724	10,908	12,369	11,238	4,694	10%
- of which au pair	1,016	682	670	678	533	591	493	334	1%
- of which interns	2,36	1,642	2,045	2,028	2,111	2,454	2,603	1,107	2%
- of which family ties to a person granted a residence permit to study	764	771	1,051	1,850	3,492	5,441	4,408	530	1%
- of which volunteers and working holiday, etc.***	3,795	1,041	76	757	879	837	973	574	1%
- of which authorization	137	189	251	528	1,281	1,784	1,893	66	<1%
- of which religious preachers, etc.	109	60	89	62	96	101	112	54	<1%
EU/EEA (E)	36,865	31,812	39,963	47,065	41,829	39,135	38,389	18,383	38%

- of which wage-earners	18,578	15,681	22,08	25,807	21,620	19,258	18,140	10,250	21%
- of which education	8,538	7,659	7,724	7,692	7,726	8,370	8,581	1,746	4%
- of which to family members of an EU/EEA national	4,691	3,695	4,977	7,575	6,374	5,244	5,104	2,73	1%
- of which to persons with sufficient means	5,015	4,736	5,142	5,952	6,076	6,241	6,544	3,642	7%
Brexit (F)	-	-	3,156	1,801	200	85	35	17	<1%
- of which wage-earners	-	-	1,364	844	48	7	7	1	<1%
- of which education	-	-	41	113	3	/	/	/	/
- of which to persons with sufficient means	-	-	658	385	39	9	9	1	<1%
Ukraine (the Special Acts) (G)	-	-	-	32,915	8,383	9,623	13,704	6,919	14%
Denmark	-	-	-	32,809	8,309	9,554	13,701	6,918	14%
Faroe Islands	-	-	-	106	74	69	3	1	<1%
Total (A+B+C+D+E+F+G)	**73,986**	**57,926**	**74,768**	**126,869**	**96,954**	**99,811**	**100,516**	**48,729**	**100%**

*January 1st – July 31st 2026
** Including positive decisions on family reunification according to EU-rules with reference to Danish nationals.
*** Since 2021 the number of permits granted in regards to gaining authorisation as a doctor in Denmark are no longer included - In 2016 it was 44, in 2017 42 in 2018 111, in 2019 166 - The numbers in the figure have been corrected.
**** A zero quota for applications for authorization was introduced for nurses on 7 October 2025 and for doctors on 15 December 2025. Consequently, applications for residence permits for authorization for these professions can no longer be submitted. The current zero quota is set to remain in effect until 31 December 2026.

Source: The Danish Immigration Service. The figures for 2019-2025 are final while the figures for 2026 are provisional and based on registrations in the immigration authorities' electronic case and document handling system as of August 1st, 2026.

2.3 Statistics on repatriation

The total number of persons who choose to repatriate differs year by year as do the nationalities of the repatriated persons. According to the Danish Repatriation Act, immigrants who choose to return to their country of origin are eligible for assistance for this purpose.

Table 2.2 shows the number of repatriated persons who received assistance to repatriate by country in the period 2014-2026.

In the period under review, the largest total number of repatriations occurred in 2025 where the total number of repatriations reached 803. The Danish Repatriation Act was extended in 2019 whereby it became possible to repatriate to Syria. Except for 2023, Syria has been the most frequent country of repatriation. As of August 2026, the number of repatriated persons to Syria constituted the largest group of repatriated persons with 513 persons. In total, there were 618 repatriated persons as of August 2026.

For further statistics, see www.integrationsbarometer.dk/tal-og-analyser/repatriering (in Danish).

Table 2.2: Number of repatriations from Denmark by country of repatriation, 2014-2026

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026*
Syria	0	0	0	0	0	100	137	152	68	33	94	665	513
Thailand	19	15	13	14	18	20	26	19	25	25	29	24	17
Serbia	26	20	28	19	19	16	22	31	19	22	11	11	15
Türkiye	70	75	64	57	60	57	55	60	47	43	28	15	15
Bosnia-Herzegovina	73	59	34	35	41	65	31	39	36	27	30	22	14
Other countries	132	154	162	216	222	244	77	125	120	154	112	66	44
Total	320	323	301	341	360	502	348	426	315	304	304	803	618

Note: The table includes the five countries with most repatriations in 2026.
Note: * The 2026 figures are provisional and include data from January through august.
Source: Danish Refugee Council.

3.0 THE STOCK OF IMMIGRANTS AND DESCENDANTS

This section elaborates on population figures, including immigrants and descendants by population category, country of origin and age as well as the development in the number of immigrants and descendants.

For further statistics on the stock of immigrants and descendants and different integration outcomes see www.integrationsbarometer.dk (in Danish).

3.1 Immigrants and descendants in Denmark

Definition of immigrants, descendants and persons of Danish origin
An immigrant is defined as a person born abroad. None of the parents are born in Denmark and has Danish nationality. If there is no available information on either of the parents and the person was born abroad, the person is also defined as an immigrant.

A descendant is defined as a person born in Denmark. None of the parents are born in Denmark and has Danish nationality. If there is no available information on either of the parents and the person in question is a foreign citizen, the person is also defined as a descendant. When one or both parents who were born in Denmark obtain Danish citizenship, their children will not be classified as descendants.

A person of Danish origin is defined as a person who, regardless of his/her place of birth, has at least one parent who is both born in Denmark and has Danish nationality.

Definition of origin
In the tables and figures Statistic Denmark's definition of Western and non-Western countries is applied. Western countries include EU member states, Andorra, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, Great Britain, the United States, and the Vatican State.

Non-Western countries include all other countries.

MENAP-countries and Türkiye is a supplement and includes; Syria, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, Qatar, Sudan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Jordan, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Yemen, Mauretania, Oman, Afghanistan, Palestine, Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Pakistan, and Türkiye.

As of January 1st 2026, there were 1,011,036 immigrants and descendants in Denmark, which makes up for 17 % of the entire population. In total, 11 % of the Danish population were immigrants and descendants of non-Western origin, while 6 % of the population were immigrants and descendants of Western origin. Immigrants and descendants from MENAP-countries and Türkiye, and from other non-Western countries, constitute 5 % and 6 % of the Danish population, respectively (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: The population in Denmark by origin and population category, at 1st January 2026 (persons, percentage)

	Persons	Proportion of total population
Non-Western origin		
Immigrants	466,809	8%
Hereof MENAP-countries and Türkiye	189,077	3%
Hereof other non-Western countries	277,732	5%
Descendants	186,424	3%
Hereof MENAP-countries and Türkiye	119,552	2%
Hereof other non-Western countries	66,872	1%
Total	653,233	11%
Hereof MENAP-countries and Türkiye	308,629	5%
Hereof other non-Western countries	344,604	6%
Western origin		
Immigrants	314,145	5%
Descendants	43,658	1%
Total	357,803	6%
All immigrants and descendants	**1,011,036**	**17%**
Danish origin	**5,014,567**	**83%**
Total population	**6,025,603**	**100%**

Source: The Immigration Database of The Ministry of Immigration and Integration (IMBEF09B), managed by Statistics Denmark.

3.2 Country of origin

More than 50 % of all immigrants and descendants living in Denmark originate in 15 countries (see Table 3.2). As of January 1st 2026, persons with origin in Türkiye constituted the largest group as 7 % of all immigrants and descendants in Denmark originate from Türkiye. The three largest groups of immigrants and descendants following persons with origin in Türkiye are persons originating from Ukraine (6 %), Poland (6 %) and Romania (5 %).

Table 3.2: Immigrants and descendants by country of origin, at 1st January 2026 (persons, percentage)

	Immigrants			Descendants			Total	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Total	Proportion of all immigrants and descendants in Denmark
Türkiye	18,792	17,194	35,986	16,410	15,839	32,249	68,235	7%
Ukraine	24,037	29,692	53,729	2,537	2,416	4,953	58,682	6%
Poland	24,949	23,178	48,127	4,384	4,101	8,485	56,612	6%
Romania	23,247	16,803	40,050	3,620	3,541	7,161	47,211	5%
Syria	19,287	15,804	35,091	5,794	5,418	11,212	46,303	5%
Germany	19,193	20,732	39,925	2,316	2,359	4,675	44,600	4%
Iraq	11,984	10,146	22,130	6,851	6,433	13,284	35,414	4%
Pakistan	9,006	8,078	17,084	6,200	6,134	12,334	29,418	3%
Iran	12,652	10,825	23,477	2,802	2,576	5,378	28,855	3%

Lebanon	7,273	6,269	13,542	7,696	7,229	14,925	28,467	3%
India	11,023	8,840	19,863	1,975	1,797	3,772	23,635	2%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7,844	8,149	15,993	3,760	3,452	7,212	23,205	2%
Afghanistan	8,109	6,971	15,080	3,847	3,619	7,466	22,546	2%
Somalia	5,597	5,377	10,974	5,478	5,271	10,749	21,723	2%
United Kingdom	10,801	5,792	16,593	962	1,005	1,967	18,560	2%
Other countries	173,507	199,803	373,310	42,913	41,347	84,260	457,570	45%
Total	387,301	393,653	780,954	117,545	112,537	230,082	1,011,036	100%

Note: The 15 countries with the highest number of immigrants and descendants are included.
Source: StatBank Denmark (FOLK1C), managed by Statistics Denmark.

Table 3.3 shows the distribution of residence permits by country of origin for the 10 countries with the highest number of immigrants in Denmark. Immigrants with a permanent residence permit are included with their latest residence permit before getting the permanent residence permit. In total, most immigrants are residents in Denmark as EU citizens. Immigrants with a non-Western country of origin often have a permit in the area of refugee or family reunification. For example, almost 6 out of 10 immigrants from Syria are refugees, whereas almost half of the immigrant population from Türkiye have a residence permit in the area of family reunification.

Table 3.3: Immigrants' residence permits by country of origin, at 1st January 2026 (percentage)

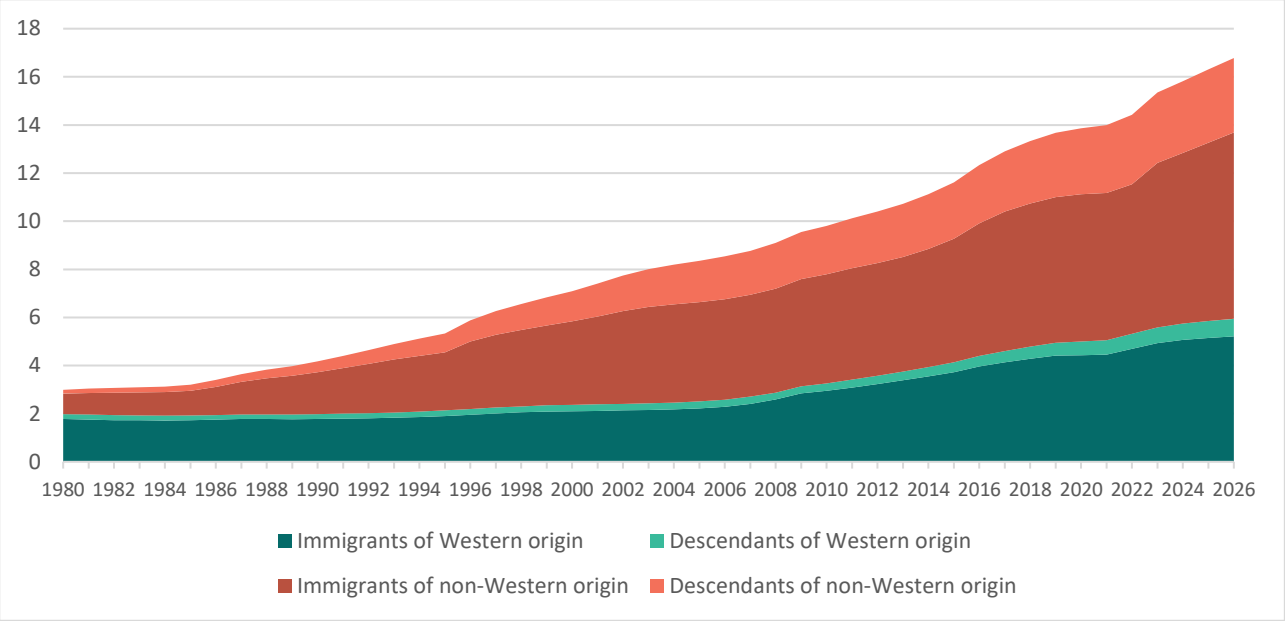
	Refugees	Family reunification	Work/Study	EU citizens	Danish/ Nordic citizens	Other	Total
Ukraine	0%	3%	16%	3%	4%	74%	100%
Poland	0%	5%	4%	78%	12%	0%	100%
Romania	0%	1%	1%	93%	5%	0%	100%
Germany	0%	2%	1%	72%	20%	4%	100%
Türkiye	0%	46%	12%	5%	36%	1%	100%
Syria	58%	34%	0%	0%	6%	2%	100%
Iran	18%	8%	33%	1%	40%	1%	100%
Iraq	16%	16%	2%	1%	64%	1%	100%
India	0%	5%	78%	4%	12%	0%	100%
Pakistan	1%	22%	25%	14%	37%	1%	100%
Other countries	7%	14%	16%	30%	32%	1%	100%
Total	8%	13%	15%	31%	27%	6%	100%

Note: Due to rounding the numbers, the table does not sum to the total. The 10 countries with the highest number of immigrants are included. Study also includes interns and au pairs. Others also includes temporary residence permits for displaced persons from Ukraine.
Source: The Immigration Database of The Ministry of Immigration and Integration (IMVD9K21), managed by Statistics Denmark.

3.3 Development in the number of immigrants and descendants in Denmark

The total number of immigrants and descendants increased with roughly 858,100 persons from 1980 to 2026. The proportion of immigrants and descendants within the total population has accordingly increased by more than 10 percentage points since 1980, from 3.0 % in 1980 to 16.8 % in 2026 (see Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1: Proportion of immigrants and descendants of the total Danish population by origin, from 1st January 1980 to 1st January 2026 (percentage)



Source: StatBank Denmark (FOLK2), provided by Statistics Denmark.

The proportion of immigrants and descendants of non-Western origin has increased continuously since 1980. Opposed to this, the proportion of immigrants of Western origin was more or less constant until the mid-zeroes (an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 1980 to 2004). However, the proportion of immigrants of Western origin has increased since then.

4.0 CHANGES IN IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION POLICIES

- On 25 June 2026, the Danish Government proposed a law introducing a new Pay Limit Scheme where the minimum salary required is DKK 322 000 per year (2026). The scheme builds on a common understanding with the Danish social partners concluded in June 2025. The scheme will cover nationals of 16 non-EU countries, linking eligibility to employment covered by specific collective wage agreements and to companies subject to such agreements. To be able to use the scheme, companies must be fulfilling a number of requirements to ensure decent working conditions and be certified by the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI). The scheme will require a close cooperation between the immigration authorities and the social partners, who will be responsible for monitoring that the collective agreements are respected by the employer.

- On 7 October 2025, the Danish government introduced a quota system to ensure that the recruitment of foreign healthcare professionals follows the actual demand in the health and care sector. Consequently, a zero-quota currently applies to foreign nurses and doctors seeking Danish professional authorization, implying that foreign nurses and doctors, as well as their accompanying family members, cannot obtain a residence permit for the purpose of obtaining Danish authorization due to lack of demand in the health care sector.

- Following the parliamentary decisions in June 2024 and November 2024 respectively to participate in those parts of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum linked to the Schengen and "Dublin" now AMMR co-operation, a national implementation bill was presented to parliament in late 2025 and debated during early 2026. However, due to the Danish election and the parliamentary situation in Denmark from February to May 2026 a new national implementation bill was presented to parliament on 25 June 2026 and was passed at the end of August 2026. The new legislation entered into force on 3 September 2026.

- From 15 June 2025, rules on suspending sentence for the purpose of return were expanded to include a larger group of foreigners, who have been expelled by court ruling, making it possible to suspend imprisonment sentences of up to 1 year if immediate return is possible. With effect from 1 January 2026 legislative changes were introduced with the aim of restricting access to some public funded services for foreigners without legal residence, and stricter control measures were introduced for foreigners without legal residence who are subject to return procedures.

- In accordance with the Schengen Borders Code, Denmark on 12 June 2026 prolonged the temporary border control to run until 11 November 2026.

- Residence permits issued under the Special Act for displaced persons from Ukraine were extended until March 2027.

- From July 2025, Denmark implemented a new three-tier social assistance framework replacing the previous "self-sufficiency and return benefit" system. The reform introduced differentiated minimum, basic and enhanced benefit levels and linked access to benefits more closely to participation in employment-related activities, Danish language instruction and municipal activation programmes.